

35 Names and Attributes

QUESTION: Does Allah have Names and Attributes? How do we understand these?

ANSWER: We have been discussing tawheed from two aspects so far. The tawheed of Ruboobiyyah (Allah's Oneness in His Lordship) and the tawheed of uloohiyah (Allah's Oneness in His Right to be worshipped).

We will now discuss the third aspect of Tawheed: the Tawheed of Allah's Names (His Asmaa) and Attributes (His Sifaat).

Muslims believe that Allah has given us certain restricted information about Himself. It would be of course difficult to worship, love and fear someone or something which we know nothing about.

Broadly speaking, this information which Allah has told us about Himself can be divided into two categories: His Names and His Attributes.

We will discuss the Names first.

Allah has Names which He has named Himself with and with which Muhammad (peace be upon him) has informed us of, after having this information revealed to him.

Many of these may be known to you already, such as:

Ar Rahman (the Extremely Merciful)
Ar Raheem (the Bestower of Mercy)
Al Razzaaq (the Great Provider)
And others.

We will also discuss Allah's attributes in forthcoming emails.

Muslims believe that all of Allah's Names are beautiful and perfect. ¹
The Quran states:

And to Allah belong the most beautiful Names.

Surah al A'raaf (the 7th chapter) verse 180

And the Quran also says:

¹ Refer to 'aqeedah ut tawheed p74 of Shaykh Saalih al Fawzaan for more information

Allah, none has the right to be worshipped except Him. To Him belong the most Perfect and Beautiful Names.

Surah TaHa (the 20th chapter) verse 8

So what is the need to discuss this issue?

Unfortunately, we find that many, many people, both Muslims and non Muslims, have made serious errors in this aspect of Tawheed, contradicting what the Quran and the Sunnah and the Companions of Muhammad (peace be upon him) said. Errors with regards to this issue can be found in hundreds of books from the past and the present, and as we shall see, this has far reaching consequences on the beliefs and practices of the Muslims.

The Quran warns the Muslims severely about this in the verse we quoted above when it was stated:

And to Allah belong the most beautiful Names, so call on Him by them and leave the company of those people who belie or deny His Names. They will be recompensed for what they used to do.

Surah al A'raaf (7) aayah 180

This is clearly then an important matter - one which the Quran has specifically warned us to pay attention to - and one that needs to be gone through methodically using the texts from the Quran and the Sunnah and the statements of the Companions and earliest scholars of Islam.

This is what we shall therefore proceed to do over the next few emails.

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NEXT TIME:

There is a very common belief amongst Muslims that Allah has only 99 Names – is this correct?

What are some examples of the Attributes of Allah which have been mentioned in the Quran or in the Sunnah?